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**NEWS From:**

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**Congressman Mike Honda**

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**FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA**

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## **Honda Assumes Duties of a Letter Carrier Walks Postal Route and Delivers Mail in Los Gatos**

*Silicon Valley Legislator Pushes for New Technology, Training for USPS to combat biohazards*

**Los Gatos, CA**— In recognition of the dedicated work of Postal Service employees, U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose) today assumed the duties of a Los Gatos letter carrier and joined letter carrier, Jim Sullivan, on his appointed rounds, delivering more than 3,700 pieces of mail to 369 addresses. Honda has been a strong advocate for dedicating more federal funding to protect Postal Service employees and mail from bioterrorism.

**“I believe that the federal government must make securing our mail and protecting our postal workers a top priority in 2002,”** said Honda. **“As I continue to fight in Congress for increased funding to pay for new technologies and equipment to protect our mail and those that deliver it, I thought it important to show my support for the Postal Service by learning firsthand about the job they do each day.”**

**“The events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent use of the mail as a vehicle for bioterrorism have placed tremendous financial burdens on the Postal Service,”** said Los Gatos Postmaster, Kathie Faupel. **“Many Americans have questioned the risk of resuming daily routines that are so vital to the nation’s economy. The post office plays a vital role in assuring the country that things are back to normal when America sees letter carriers making their appointed rounds.”**

As a Vice Chair of the Democratic Homeland Security Task Force, Honda helped to author the United States Security Act of 2001 (or *USA Act*). The bill is a sweeping counter-terrorism measure that calls for \$24 billion in spending to provide state and local government with the latest in equipment and training to protect our nation’s critical infrastructure. The bill, introduced on December 20, 2001, includes a provision drafted by Honda that authorizes over \$1 billion to protect postal workers and better enable the USPS to detect and neutralize threats to the mail using the latest technology. Included in Honda’s \$1 billion proposal:

- \$33.2 million for new protective equipment for mail handlers
- \$25.6 million for environmental testing equipment and services at USPS facilities
- \$245 million for the acquisition and installation of antibiological systems using the latest in sanitation technology
- \$53 million for the testing and deployment of new sanitation technology to be used at USPS facilities and for training USPS personnel on how to use it.

- \$9.5 million for off-site irradiation services
- \$306 million for the development of new hazard detection equipment to be procured in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Biological Warfare Detection.
- \$97 million for USPS building, heating, ventilation and air conditioning system modifications based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recent recommendations.
- \$145 million for major equipment modification, including installation of automatic vacuuming equipment which prevents aerosolized particles from becoming airborne when being processed by sorting machines (as was seen at the Brentwood Facility in Washington DC in October 2001).

**“The Postal Service is a critical component of the \$900 billion mailing industry that employs nine million people and is responsible for eight percent of the gross domestic product in the United States,” said Honda. “Virtually every community in the nation depends upon the safe delivery of the U.S. mail on a personal or commercial basis. The men and women of the Postal Service need and deserve the best in training and technology as they continue to fulfill their duties for the American people.”**